

SSCSD 2021-22 Stay Open Plan



All grade levels at the Saratoga Springs City school District will return to full-time, in-person learning. The key to our safe reopening will be the continuation of core mitigation strategies (our safety shield). We will continue to review and research all CDC guidance, work closely with the Saratoga County Department of Health and consult with local medical experts on all safety recommendations and strategies. The strategies below will continue to be reviewed and updated based on any new health - safety guidelines and COVID-19 conditions in the Saratoga County area.

Safety Layered Approach (SSCSD Safety Shield):

SSCSD will take a layered safety approach to keeping all students, staff, and visitors safe upon returning to school for the 21-22 school year.

Each safety strategy is a layer of protection. We have six primary layers to our safety shield. At certain times you will not be able to complete all safety strategies, but each one provides its own layer for safety. Our Safety Shield's six layers are:

- 1. Facial Coverings**
- 2. Physical Distancing**
- 3. Cleaning and Disinfecting**
- 4. Healthy Hygiene**
- 5. Ventilation**
- 6. Vaccination when eligible**

1. Facial coverings:

Masking is a critical measure to contain the spread of COVID-19. When teachers, staff, and students consistently and correctly wear a mask, they protect others, as well as themselves.

- **Indoors:** Masking is required for the indoors for all individuals age 2 years and older, including students, teachers, staff, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status.
 - Masks may be removed during meals while eating.
 - Consistent and correct mask use is especially important indoors and in crowded settings, when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- **Outdoors:** People do not need to wear masks when outdoors.
- **Transportation:** Students must wear masks at all times when on school buses. Drivers must wear masks whenever students are on the bus. (Federal Mandate)

- **Mask Breaks:** Mask breaks will be at the discretion of the staff based on student need. During mask breaks, appropriate physical distancing must be maintained and an activity that would not promote speaking is encouraged.

2. Physical Distancing:

All students and staff should maintain a three-foot distance apart when possible. When eating further physical distancing is recommended when possible.

- **Cohorts/assigned seating:** Students organized in groups/classrooms and other cohorts help mitigate transmission of the virus. Assigned seating is also important because it effectively creates even smaller groups within cohorts to minimize transmission and reduce exposure. Wherever possible, seats should be assigned (including classroom, bus, meals). If mixing of students is needed based on services, try to maintain consistent cohorts for these activities when possible.
- **Sharing of School Resources:** Limit use of shared supplies to one group of students, clean between use by cohorts of students; it is recommended to keep individual student belongings separated.
- **Singing/ Instrumental:** Masks must be worn while singing and wind instruments should use bell covers. Physical distancing for these activities remains 3 ft when possible.
- **Playing Outside/Recess:** Continue to use a layered approach to safety. While masks are not required outdoors at this time, cohorting and hand washing is recommended. Recreational equipment should be disinfected in between groups, when possible. Mask use while playing outdoors is optional.

3. Cleaning and Disinfecting

- **CDC is currently advising that people should concentrate efforts of cleaning surfaces. A routine disinfecting schedule should be established.** In general, cleaning once a day is usually enough to sufficiently remove potential viruses that may be on surfaces. Daily logs will be maintained by custodial staff.
- High Touch surfaces will be prioritized and cleaned at least once a day.
- Classroom spaces will be disinfected twice per week, unless there is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19
- High contact surfaces on school buses will be cleaned between each run. All buses will be disinfected once each day.
- If a facility has had a sick person or someone who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 24 hours, the space will be cleaned and disinfected.

4. Healthy Hygiene:

- **Hand washing:** Students and staff are recommended to exercise hand hygiene (handwashing or sanitizing) upon arrival to school, before eating, before putting on and

DRAFT 9-1-2021 Operations Advisory – Please note that the plan will be updated regularly throughout the year.

taking off masks, and before dismissal. Handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is the best practice. However, hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol should be substituted when handwashing is not available

- **Respiratory Etiquette:** The COVID-19 virus spreads from person to person in droplets produced by coughs and sneezes. Therefore, it is important that students and staff cover their mouths or noses with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and dispose of the tissue appropriately. If no tissue is available, using the inside of the elbow (or shirtsleeve) to cover the mouth or nose is preferable to using the hands. Always perform hand hygiene after sneezing, coughing and handling dirty tissues or other soiled material.
- **Personal Protective Equipment**
 - SSCSD will provide appropriate PPE to staff and students as appropriate, i.e., masks, gowns, gloves, hand sanitizer, etc.
 - SSCSD will maintain an appropriate supply of PPE.
- **Health and Wellness Screening: Pinpoint**
 - SSCSD will require students and staff to utilize the Pinpoint screening health and wellness application daily.
 - Staff and students must monitor themselves for symptoms. Staff and students must stay home if feeling unwell and reach out to their healthcare provider for testing and care. Everyone must do their part to protect others and not come to school if they are exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms or are feeling sick.
 - Visitors to SSCSD will be required to sign in and complete a health screening.

5. Ventilation and Fresh Air:

The SSCSD Facilities department will ensure that all HVAC systems are set to maximize ventilation and bring in as much outdoor air as a system will safely allow. If safe to do so, open windows and doors. Even just cracking open a window or door helps increase outdoor airflow, which helps reduce the potential concentration of virus particles in the air. During transportation, open or crack windows in buses and other forms of transportation, if doing so does not pose a safety risk. Keeping windows open a few inches will improve air circulation.

Use of fans, when available, increases the effectiveness of open windows:

- To safely achieve this, fan placement is important and will vary based on room configuration. Avoid placing fans in a way that could potentially cause contaminated air to flow directly from one person to another. One helpful strategy is to use a window fan, placed safely and securely in a window, to exhaust room air to the outdoors. This will help draw outdoor air into the room via other open windows and doors without generating strong room air currents.

6. Vaccination for Eligible Persons:

DRAFT 9-1-2021 Operations Advisory – Please note that the plan will be updated regularly throughout the year.

- The CDC recommends that all teachers, staff and eligible students be vaccinated as soon as possible.
- Saratoga Springs City School District will continue to promote vaccinations and host vaccination clinics as needed.

Other:

- **Managing Ill Students:**
 - SSCSD will continue to utilize the “waiting room model”. Buildings will establish a system that will keep well students needing medical triage and symptomatic students separated.
 - Ill students will be sent home immediately, and parents will be notified of the return to school policy. Students will be required to present a negative PCR test to return to school.
- **Contact Tracing and Quarantine Protocols:**
 - If/when COVID-19 cases are discovered in the school, the district will follow all recommended protocols from the Saratoga County Department of Public health and CDC.
- **COVID-19 Testing:**
 - SSCSD will follow recommendations from the CDC and Saratoga County Department of Health regarding testing individuals as necessary.
- **Facilities Use:**
 - Facilities use will be limited to school related groups and community groups. Use by groups will be reviewed on an individual basis and approval will depend on current COVID-19 transmission rates in the community.
- **Visitors:**
 - Visitors or volunteers will be permitted on school campuses on a limited basis. Parents and guardians will report to the main office and will not be allowed beyond that point unless it is for the safety or well-being of their child. Essential visitors to facilities will be required to wear face coverings, will be restricted in their access to our school buildings and will be mandated to participate in the district’s screening process. District/building administrators will make the final determination if a visitor is deemed essential.

Food Service/Cafeterias:

- Face coverings must be worn by all food service staff keeping with current CDC guidelines
- Sneeze guards, physical distancing and limited touch serving will be in place. Sanitizing of all areas and equipment will be conducted daily.
- Each lunch table and seating area will be cleaned and disinfected after each group of students leave the cafeteria and before the next group arrives.

DRAFT 9-1-2021 Operations Advisory – Please note that the plan will be updated regularly throughout the year.

- Breakfast and lunch may be eaten in the classroom, or by staggering seating in the cafeteria.
- Disposable and compostable food service items (e.g., utensils, dishes, trays) and single serve food items will be used.

Hallway Lockers: SSSCD will utilize scheduling to reduce congestion in hallways, when possible, to allow students to access their lockers.

Gym Locker Rooms: TBD by the SSCSD physical education department based on best practices.

Field Trips: Field trips at this point will be limited and will be reviewed on an individual basis throughout the year.

Instructional Components: The primary objective of SSCSD's Stay Open Instructional Plan is to provide in-person learning for all students, five days per week with minimal disruption as students benefit most from in-person learning. Schools will follow their regular schedules.

Should the need to shift to **on-line** occur (ex. whether by individual class, grade or school) regular schedules will continue to be followed, and teachers will apply best practices in online instruction utilizing their ZOOM accounts. Additional guidance documents for the pivot to online learning are being finalized and will be placed in Teams. Teachers should prepare their students and families with online procedures ahead of time in order to be prepared for a potential shift during the year.

We will continue to develop **quarantine guidance and procedures** for students to access work while they are out. We are not using a hybrid model this year.

References:

- *Centers for Disease Control Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools*
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>
- *Centers for Disease Control Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People*
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>
- *American Academy of Pediatrics COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools*
<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>
- *NYS Department of Education Health and Safety Guide for the 2021-2022 School Year*
<http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/back-school/nysed-health-and-safety-guide-for-the-2021-2022-school-year.pdf>

DRAFT 9-1-2021 Operations Advisory – Please note that the plan will be updated regularly throughout the year.